

## WARDEN MESSAGE

June 15, 2011

*THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IS TRANSMITTING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION THROUGH THE EMBASSY WARDEN SYSTEM AS A PUBLIC SERVICE TO U.S. CITIZENS IN THE PHILIPPINES. PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS MESSAGE TO ALL U.S. CITIZENS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION OR NEIGHBORHOOD. THANK YOU.*

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The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of terrorist activity in the Philippines, particularly in the Sulu Archipelago and on the island of Mindanao. Terrorist attacks could be indiscriminate and could occur in other areas, to include Manila. Targeted sites may be public gathering places including, but not limited to, airports, shopping malls, conference centers, and other public venues. This Travel Warning replaces the Travel Warning dated November 2, 2010, and updates specific regions of concern and reflects continuing threats due to terrorist and insurgent activities.

Travelers should exercise extreme caution if traveling to Mindanao or the Sulu Archipelago. Regional terrorist groups have carried out bombings resulting in injuries and death. Sporadic clashes have occurred between lawless groups and the Philippine Armed Forces throughout Mindanao, particularly in rural areas. U.S. Government employees must seek special permission to travel to Mindanao or the Sulu Archipelago.

The Philippine government declared a state of emergency on November 24, 2009, for the Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat provinces, as well as Cotabato City in Mindanao, as a result of election-related violence. Although the elections have passed, this state of emergency is still in effect. Travelers should be aware of heightened police activity and significant military presence in these areas. They should carefully research restrictions imposed on travel and follow the instructions of government officials.

Kidnap-for-ransom gangs are active throughout the Philippines and have targeted foreigners. U.S. citizens traveling, living, and working throughout the Philippines are urged to exercise heightened caution in public gathering places. U.S. citizens should exercise caution when traveling in the vicinity of demonstrations since they can turn confrontational and possibly escalate to violence.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. The Worldwide Caution reminds U.S. citizens that terrorism can occur anywhere.

We encourage all U.S. citizens in the Philippines to enroll with the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. By enrolling, you can receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during your trip. Enrolling also ensures that we can reach you, or your designated emergency points of contact, during an emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at: 1201 Roxas Boulevard, Manila, Philippines, tel. 63-2-301-2000. The American Citizens Services (ACS) section's fax number is 63-2-301-2017, and you may reach the ACS Section by email at [ACSinfoManila@state.gov](mailto:ACSinfoManila@state.gov). The ACS Section's website includes consular information and the most recent messages to the U.S. citizen community in the Philippines.

For more detailed information on general crime and security issues in the Philippines, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information for the Philippines.

You may also obtain information on security by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Stay up to date by bookmarking our Bureau of Consular Affairs website, which also contains the current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts as well as the Worldwide Caution. Follow us on Twitter and become a fan of the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well.